Calvert

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Calvert

Fall 1982

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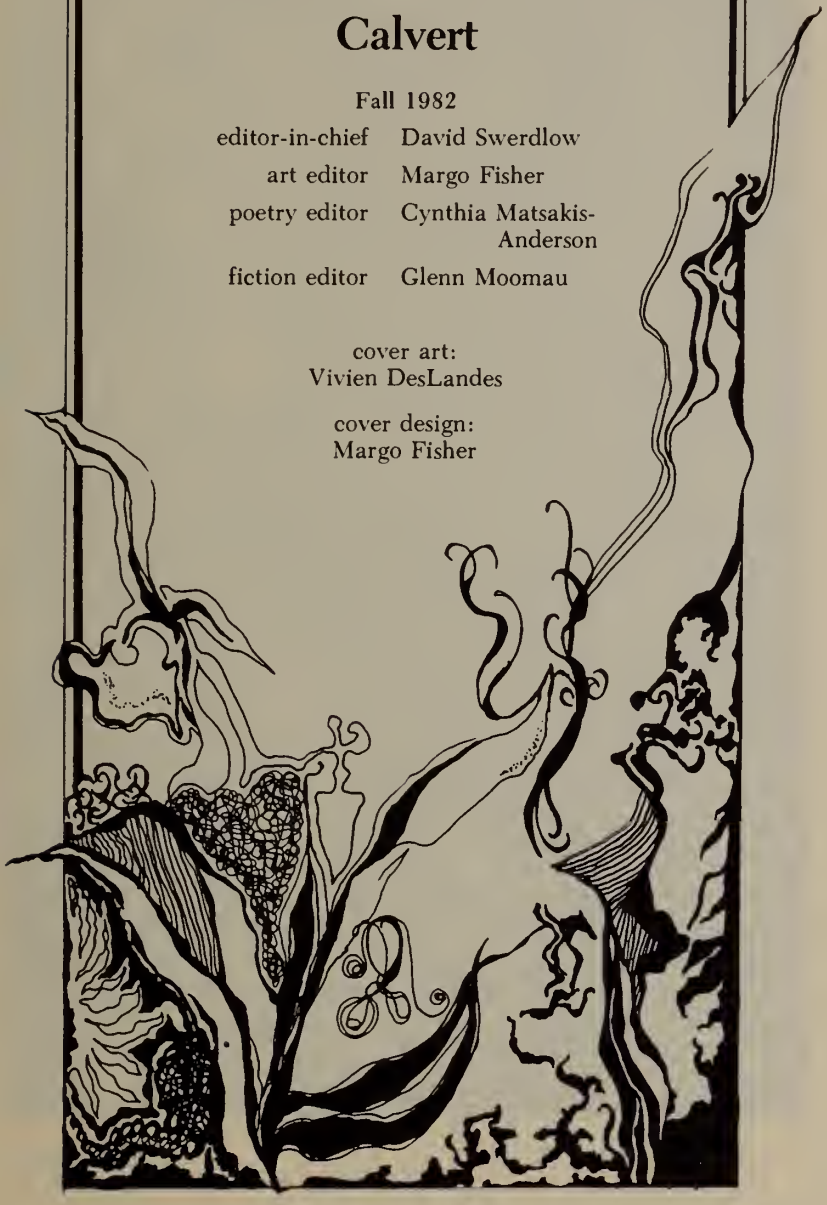

— *Marcie Wolf*

— Gerry Hinds

With the exception of Ann Darr, an exceptional poet that taught at Maryland last year, all of the artists represented in this issue attend or teach at the University of Maryland. Clearly, creativity is not declining on campus; rather, we believe a sort of renaissance is occuring.

The editors of Calvert would like to thank those people and organizations, such as the West Gallery and the English Undergraduate Association, for their help and cooperation in the revitalization of the arts on campus. We're sure that there are many other groups at this university that encourage creativity; Calvert would like to extend its help and gratitude to all of them.

Throughout the years, Calvert's presence on campus has been unpredictable at best. We are doing our best to reinforce the strength of a very important feature at the university, a showcase for the arts. Thank you for your commitment— it's what keeps us going

Calvert

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— Robert Zimmet

McGraw Tower

When the air is this clear
you want to walk out on it
You can You just let it bear
your weight like the whole planet

It'll lift you up Let you walk
leaf-like Just take a step out
over the railing And linger: cupped
and suspended right there

where you can look straight under
your feet at the slate roofs that
have fishscales and angle
out Please Run out

over the hills out
over the lake (See the white
triangle sails): —Come out
here Away from the tower the

bells you stoop under from
the railing Step
over the railing Over
the carved ledge Out of the tower

Over air You won't
fall We'll run out
across hills & water The lake
will go by under us like sunlight.——

— *Daryl Wakeley*

To Julia

You'll never remember
that day we marked your first year.
"at her home on Cape Cod"
Someone was missing,
and you danced, smiling
at your feet.
I was writing
the obituary when
you learned how to
climb up the stairs.
"she is survived by"
We still have photographs:
your mother breaking
eggs, your uncles
leaning in the kitchen,
the candle on the cake
no one ate, you, amazed,
reaching for anything fragile.

"and her first grandchild"
Keep dancing, Julia,
the sun only slants
this way for an instant.

— *Susan Libby*

Doves

You—my darling assassin—
When you speak to me,
When you open your mouth to speak,
There are, it's true,
Flocks of doves
Doves that break in a crowd
From the canyon of your throat
They are eternally
Flying south
In the prison of a single dimension.

— *Tomás Martin*

— Hal Schmulowitz

The Gambler's Daughter

— D.S. Glassman

The air had the clarity of a teardrop, as the ferry to Sausalito slipped its moorings and headed across the bay. On the upper deck, a woman dressed completely in black sat at the end of a bench occupied by a party of Japanese tourists. The boat approached Alcatraz, and she studied the island — the prison buildings with their shattered windowpanes; the deserted ramparts, on which vines and wild grasses had taken root — and the thought formed in her mind, "Soon I will be free."

One of the Japanese men leaned toward her and inquired, "Excuse me, when do we see Golden Gate bridge?"

She shook her head. "I'm afraid I don't know. I'm a stranger in San Francisco."

The man shrugged. A moment later, the boat swung around and the bridge came into view, its strong, graceful curve imprinted on the sky. Passengers rose from their seats and crowded the railing, while the Japanese began twirling the dials on their cameras and extending the legs of their tripods. The woman in black stood up. The boat gave a lurch, throwing her back into her seat. Instantly, a scenario of shipwreck ran through her mind. She surveyed the deck with her eyes, noting a pile of rafts under a tarpaulin. How many passengers could each one hold? There must be people on the deck below who would require special care, or they would perish — tremulous old men with canes, children clinging to their parents. She imagined the ship going under, sucking the rafts down into its vortex.

With an effort, she thrust away the fantasy. Rising once again to her feet, she walked to the railing — a tall, square-shouldered woman of forty, with an intense but controlled expression and the purposeful movements of an envoy on a mission.

A short distance from the ferry, a helicopter was hovering low over the bay. As its rotors whirled, the waters below churned violently in a circle and threw up a cloud of spray. A rope hung down from the plane to the water. Was a rescue operation taking place, or a scientific experiment, or the recovery of some object from the depths — a body, a treasure? It was impossible to tell. The woman leaned on the railing, the Golden Gate bridge forgotten, expecting at every moment to see something hauled up at the end of the rope. But nothing changed — the solitary helicopter continued to hover and the waters to boil, attached by the cord that plunged to an unknown depth.

When the boat reached Sausalito, she was the last person to disembark. She carried a brown-paper parcel the size of a shoebox, which she was holding cautiously so that it did not touch her body. At the end of the wharf, she paused to survey the town. There was a park bright with flowers; a hotel with a scalloped roofline, recently painted in cream trimmed with brown; and hills sloping down to the bay and dotted with citrus-colored houses. She was reminded of the Riviera. It was understandable that her father had wanted to live here.

Off to her right, the shoreline curved and a crowd of white boats were moored, their masts bobbing. That must be the marina, where his boat was docked. She consulted a time-table. The last ferry would be departing at seven o'clock. There was plenty of time to accomplish the task for which she had come to Sausalito.

She began to stroll along a street lined with expensive shops. Her father must often have walked past them, on his way to the ferry. The freshly-washed shop windows sparkled in the sunlight. Behind them the crepe blouses, the kites shaped like dragons, the hand-carved toys and the strawberries that had been dipped in chocolate seemed to glow, imbued with a special significance, as if they were magical and unobtainable objects, instead of wares she could possess by the simple act of purchase. Had her father liked strawberries, she wondered? For an hour, she strolled in and out of shops.

She came to the marina. The office was housed in a shack cluttered with bait buckets, lanterns, coils of rope and cards of fishing lures. Men in windbreakers were browsing, and a couple in new-looking yachting clothes were talking with the man behind the counter. "I'd take her out before the fog blows up, if I were you," he was saying. "I'd stay near shore."

No one paid any attention to her arrival. She moved along the walls studying the charts that showed the shoals and channels of the nearby waters, and finally she came to a diagram of the marina that had been taped to the wall. The names of boat-owners were penciled along the docks, showing where their boats were moored. She found her father's name, and then she left the office.

Outside, there were too many people around. Families with toddlers were contemplating the boats, couples were embracing, shirtless boys with transistor radios were fishing off the pier.

She turned away and resumed her walk, studying the menus that hung outside the restaurants. She felt a desire to eat something that came from the sea. She found a cafe with an empty table by the window. The whitewashed walls had been decorated with hanging plants, starfish, and a string of glass floats. She went inside and took the seat near the window. She felt relieved when she had put down her package, which contained her father's ashes in a jar.

The restaurant was deserted, except for a couple at the next table who were finishing their lunch. They had evidently been quarrelling, and her arrival had interrupted them. Once she had seated herself, they resumed their argument in lowered tones.

"I happen to know something about boats," the man was saying. "But you just kept cutting me off."

"I never said you didn't."

"So why did you have to keep asking the salesmen all those questions?"

And why did people continue to need the ones who hurt them? The woman who had just sat down gazed out the window, trying not to listen. Outside, a steady stream of people was passing. Two teenage girls came by, their arms linked, talking animatedly. They were followed by a dark-bearded young man carrying a child asleep in a canvas back-pack. His pregnant wife lagged a step behind, her forehead creased with lines of weariness. Next came a group of middle-aged tourists carrying cameras and bright shopping bags, and a young man with a camera who posed his girlfriend against the backdrop of the San Francisco skyline, which could be seen very clearly across the bay. The girl was laughing as she tried to restrain her windblown hair with her hands.

The sun shone through the window on the woman in black. She could feel its warmth through her clothes. Her walk had tired her, and she wished she could lie down for a while. She spread her toes to ease them, inside her shoes.

The waitress appeared, setting on the table a small, warm loaf and a curl of butter. She was a large woman with prominent blue eyes and greying hair, wearing a loose Indian cotton garment of red, pink, and purple in a swirling pattern, and an incongruous pair of leather boots. She said, "Would you like to order?"

The seated woman inspected the waitress with a curiosity she sensed was

mutual, and asked, "Are the mussels fresh?"

"Yes, they were brought in just this morning."

"Then I'd like a bucket of mussels. How is the house wine?"

"Good. It comes from a vineyard in the Napa Valley that belongs to the uncle of the owner."

"I'll try a glass of the white."

The waitress withdrew, her heels clumping loudly on the wooden floor, and returned with a large amber-colored glass of wine. When her customer had taken a sip, the waitress asked, "Do you like it?"

"Very much. It's excellent. I've had nothing but good wine since I arrived in California."

"Are you here on business?"

"No, I had to attend a funeral."

"I'm sorry. Someone close?"

"Close? That's hard to say."

"Well, I'll be back shortly with your mussels." The footsteps retreated to the kitchen.

The woman sipped the wine. Whenever she set down the glass, a dollop of molten sunlight swam in its depths. Across the room, a shaft of light flashed with dazzling brightness on a chromium pitcher.

She continued to drink until all the bright edges had softened to a glow.

She had thought many times, "One day I will receive a telephone call to tell me he is dead. And I will refuse to go to the funeral." But when a call had finally come, to let her know he was dying, she had taken a plane the same day.

She had found him lying in a hospital bed—toothless, his skin mottled, his scaly eyelids closed—and at first she had not known him and had had to look at the name on his chart. As she had stood by the bedside regarding him, his eyes had opened, he had glared at her without recognition, and said in a weak, resentful voice, "What do you want?" Then, as she had continued to stand there without speaking, he had whispered, "Is it Judith?"

"Yes, it's Judith."

His face had become even more wrinkled, and he had begun, soundlessly, to cry. She had watched, feeling no emotion, and eventually had handed him a tissue. Then she had pulled a chair close to the bed and sat down to wait.

A steaming platter of mussels was placed on the table. The waitress said, "There you are," and stepped back. Folding her arms, she said, "Take a taste."

The plump, fetal mussels, sprinkled with parsley, lay curled in their half-open shells. They looked very fresh. Judith detached one of the orange morsels from its nest, dipped it in the creamy sauce, and lifted it to her lips. "Good," she said. "I see you take an interest in your work."

The waitress nodded. "Nothing is more important than proper diet. People should eat lower on the food chain. this preserves the resources of the earth. You like the sauce?"

"It's unusual."

"That's right," said the waitress. "I invented it. The idea of trying Pernod came to me in a dream."

"Really."

"You don't believe in dreams. Do you believe in auras? That some people have very strong auras?"

"I'm afraid I don't know anything about auras."

"Is that so? Well, never mind. Can I get you anything else?"

"Another glass of wine, please."

The waitress complied. Judith savored the mussels slowly.

"Do you gamble?" the sick man had asked suddenly, when she had thought he was asleep.

"What?"

"Do you gamble, do you like to gamble?"

"Not particularly. Why?"

"I do. I wondered—was it in the blood, something like that. But you say no. That's good, you're smart."

"Not really, it just was never . . . Gambling has been important to you, then?"

"I used to take the night bus to Reno, all the time. Hit the tables by nine a.m. There's no thrill like it. What a rush!" He had given a dry, old-man's cackle. "Important? Yes, you could say important." His laughter had turned into a fit of coughing, and soon there had been nurses, and basins, and blood.

A veil, fine and featureless, had been drawn over the sky; behind it the luminous disk of the sun was paling rapidly. The view of San Francisco had become indistinct, as if the city were dissolving. All the wavelets on the bay had lost their silver tips. Judith tapped on her wineglass with the edge of her knife, producing a clear, ringing note that shivered the still air of the cafe. No one came. She looked at her watch.

There had been a time when she had searched for him, in old photograph albums, from which her mother had torn his picture; in the telephone directories of distant cities; in discreet conversations with aunts and cousins on "his side;" in her three marriages . . . When she had been very young, his reappearances had filled her with a giddy excitement. Later, they had made her hope that soon he and she would talk and come to know each other deeply. And finally he had reappeared, long—too long—after the death of her son, and she had refused ever to see him again.

One day in the hospital, he had seemed stronger. His lunch tray was brought, and she gave him a few spoonfuls of soup, thinking that he had fed her when she had been a child. It seemed impossible. Yet even a reluctant father must have done so at least once.

"No more," he said, turning away his head.

"Not even a little milk?" she coaxed. "Oh, there's ice cream." With ice cream she had tempted the appetite of her son, when he had been dying; until finally he had refused even that. She thrust the recollection away, back into its cell. So many cells, each containing a dangerous memory, a disturber of the peace. she had learned to live in the present as much as possible, shutting out the past; like a convict enjoying an exercise yard by turning his back on his prison.

Her father spoke. "I suppose you think I'm a pretty terrible fellow."

What was there to say? she found both protestations and reproaches distasteful.

He said, "From your standpoint, I guess you're right. By my lights I've lived a good life. Of course I have my regrets. I wouldn't have minded a bit more money. I could have travelled more. Always wanted to see Hong Kong, for some reason. But I've travelled a good deal."

"You used to write me letters, when I was little," she said, and did not add, "but then you stopped—why?" She said, "I still have a broach you sent me from Brazil when I was twelve. It was made of blue butterfly wings, irridescent. Do you remember?"

"Sure!" For a moment, his eyes brightened. "You have that? Oh, I'd like to see it again. Do you have it with you?"

She shook her head. "I left it home. I'm sorry."

"Rio in Carnival time! What a city! Ever been there? No? Of course, I was a lot younger then." He began to sing the words of a song in Portuguese, faintly, twitching his emaciated shoulders. He was smiling.

"Dad—" she said. The word slipped almost naturally from her lips.

"Don't ask me any questions. I'm tired," he said, his head rolling sideways. She was standing over the bed, leaning forward, her arm resting beside the lunch tray, her hand gripping the plastic spoon.

He straightened his head on the pillow, and their eyes met for a long, achingly familiar moment. One of his slack hands rose, and with his forefinger he tapped her lightly on the nose. Was it a caress? "Little Judy," he said, and smiled.

Moments later, he was asleep and snoring.

Across the bay, the view of San Francisco had by now completely vanished, as if it had never existed.

"Did you want something else?" The waitress stood in the gathering shadows. Judith had not heard her approach.

"No, just the check. It's getting late. Tell me, does the weather always change this fast in Sausalito?"

"Sometimes, when the fog is blowing in." the waitress presented the bill. "I hope you liked your meal."

"Very much, thank you."

Judith paid the check. The waitress said, "Let me give you my card," and extended a square of blue pasteboard imprinted with the words, "Expert Consultant: Astrology, Palmistry, Tarot. Know Thyself."

Judith took it, and after a moment held out her hand, saying, "Will you read my palm?"

The waitress shook her head. "Not now, I have to prepare for the evening meal. You can call me and make an appointment."

"I'm afraid I have to return to San Francisco before the ferry stops running."

The waitress shrugged. "Maybe some other time, then."

Judith stood up and walked toward the door.

"Don't you want your package?"

"Oh! Yes, of course."

Outside there was a rawness in the air, and shadows were thickening in the doorways. A dense grey mist pressed downward toward the earth. In the streets, people still wandered, but fewer than before. Their steps had become hurried and uneven, and their flowered shopping bags looked insincere. Wisps of fog were drifting across the road.

Judith strode down the hill toward the marina. Mist was filling the tiny, tilted gardens around the doll-size houses. Her eye was caught by an unfamiliar vine, growing strongly beside a doorway. The vine was covered with large coarse trumpets of dark yellow streaked with red. Several blossoms had fallen. She picked one up. It had a fleshy texture, like a magnolia. She stroked the flaring cup and allowed its curved tip to curl around her finger like the hand of a baby. It clung so closely that, when she extended her hand, the flower continued to hang from her finger without falling. She walked on, carrying the flower, stroking it with her thumb until the petals became crumpled. Then she shook it from her hand.

The word "love" had been spoken only once.

The sick man's breathing had been growing more labored, and talking had become difficult for him. He had whispered, "You know, my boat is the only thing I love." She had flexed her ankle sharply, but he had not noticed. "I still keep it in the marina—in Sausalito. Too bad I never—took you sailing."

"It doesn't matter," she had said. "Try to rest." He did not love her.

"Wish I could leave you—the boat. Wish I could leave you—anything. Debts. Sorry. That's the way it goes."

"It's all right," she had said. "Don't worry about it. I have plenty of money now."

"Good for you."

"That's the way it goes." Of course he had not loved her. A fact was a fact. Why make a fuss?

He had closed his eyes. Oxygen had been bubbling through a tube, a catheter had been draining a dark fluid, and with his every breath a pleated white paper accordion in a glass cylinder had expanded and then collapsed.

By now she was nearing the waterfront, and the shroud of fog was heavy. Her steps slowed. Her breathing sounded loud, a white paper accordion in a glass cylinder.

Suddenly, out on the bay, the huge,sorrowful voice of a foghorn called. The cry was repeated—a lingering, bass note—and she felt grief choke her, like a hand on her throat. Tears surged upward and then receded, leaving an ache in her chest. She had not cried since childhood, not even when her son had died. The tears seemed buried, like water in a well that has been sealed.

While her father had been in surgery she had sat in a sordid waiting room, surrounded by strangers who avoided each others' eyes. Candy wrappers, flattened cigarette butts, paper cups stained with coffee—all the melancholy debris of solace—lay scattered under the plastic chairs. The magazines on the tables were worn and limp, their covers puckered into networks of fibrous wrinkles from much handling.

A three-year-old child had been crouched on the floor in the center of the room, screaming with loud, rhythmic, hopeless persistence. The adults appeared to see and hear nothing, and it was impossible to tell to whom the child belonged. After a while he had begun to rock back and forth on hands and knees, his screams growing hoarser and more insistent, and a long string of mucus, flexible as cobweb, had dripped from his nose to the floor. Everyone but Judith had continued to ignore him. At last she had gone over to him and attempted self-consciously to wipe his face with a piece of tissue. He had struck out at her in a vicious, futile spasm of rage. At this moment, the doctor had entered the room and spoken her name. She had turned and he had said, "I'm sorry . . . "

She had hurried from the room, grateful to be leaving it.

All day she carried with her the image of the child and the sound of his cries, until finally her eyes had begun to sting. She had reached in her pocket for a kleenex, but the one she found was the same with which she had wiped the child's nose. Disgust, and an irrational fear of being infected with his despair, had gripped her. She had thrown the kleenex in the garbage can, and washed her hands twice. She had not cried.

The fog had seeped into her clothing. She was chilled. Shivering, she turned in to the pier extending out into the bay. Water sloshed steadily against the pilings. The shapes of boats solidified in the fog and then dissolved as she passed. They

pulled at their moorings, jarring the dock. She tried lighting her way with matches, but they flickered out quickly. She advanced down the pier until she came to the end. There was no railing. Beyond was only fog. Her father's boat was docked here. A current of air thinned the mist, and she could see the mast and ropes. She unwrapped her package, drawing out a box, from which she took a jar. This she opened.

Holding it in the crook of her arm, she ignited the remaining matches so that they flared up like a torch. The boat swung gently toward her, nudging the dock. On the prow she saw the name, "Little Judy."

The matches fell from her hand into the water, and the tears that had dried up, began to flow. they came with the clean violence of a desert stream, scouring and buffetting and carrying her on their tide, for a long time.

She groped with her hand in the jar. Slowly and devoutly she sowed the ashes on the fog, through which they sifted invisibly into the waters of the bay.

— Marcie Wolf

Viet Lunch

Two red tulips
The woman and man by the window face
Across martinis and a coke

By this wall, I
Have a spider chrysanthemum, water
And carrots cut like flowers

There, two women
Confuse their yellow flower
With bloodymarys and cigarettes

The flower is not enough?

Is there a soldier in the bamboo
Agent orange in the duck sauce
The flowers?

A metrobus rolls redwhiteandblue by
Wigs are for sale across the street
The people eat with stainless steel forks

— *Kristin Zimmer*

— Ki Ho Park

— Robert Zimmet

Gleaning

We try to work in straight lines, to pull
the matter of this year's bread from beneath
our feet in fields once our own. Here
as a girl I watched my father begin
his wheat, tossing the small, pale seeds
in handfuls that paused to spread in the air,
and before the harvest I put my fingers
to the stalks, sang them my mother's songs
and prayed for them. Now we feed
on what is left behind by men who hurry,
miss, and forget too much, who judge
their work by hours and by coins.
Next year they will sow this field to beans
and clover; we will not come back.

— *Rose Solari*

Another Afternoon

The screen bangs shut
as a rat scurries under the kitchen sink
where ammonia is stored
to remove fingerprints
from the stolen tea service
so the kids can eat again
but you can't get a birthday cake
with food stamps, lady.
The baby laughs as the crunchy roach
tickles her feet
Momma unwraps the last piece of butterscotch
to think on
and Grandpa farts in the black vinyl chair
he's been sitting in all his life
and coughs up more slime.
He never loses his temper and wanted to commit suicide long ago.
They won't let him
so he peels grapes all day
and watches traffic
excited at the thought of a wreck.

— *Heidi Bohi*

Blacktop

In the secret underground
of fortress
jungle or movie,

half-way through my fourth grade,
the rush for coats,
morning recess,
I held a glimpse,
the new girl's
eyes and hair of brown
and scared.

The crowd throbbed us,
within arms reach
I smelled clean green sweater.
My mouth was closed.
I punched her square
in the back.
She turned around
in pain and angry,
spotted my hand
hurry to my side.

We stopped
both
sweating red
and looked

the crush of peers
led us to the door,
spit us out,
we ran,
yelled
and played kickball
and smear-the-queer.

— *Tom White*

— Roger Allen

RAY GUN:
A New Adventure of Jim Love

— Jon Armstrong

My electric aluminum collar was turned down. Hearing a noise, I turned just in time to shout, "Dr. Spegeticus! Watch out!" Instinctively, I grabbed for my tin foil ray gun. With my lips puckered, I made a noise like, "Whuuuu. . . " The would-be-assasin had met his match.

RAY GUNS AND THEIR RULES

1 RAY GUN IS ANYTHING THAT HAS A 90 DEGREE ANGLE TO ITS FORM
2 RAY GUN IS A FOUND THING
3 NO RAY GUN CAN SHOOT

Driving in my Mustang; wipers clearing the windshield. Does it always rain here? It seems to whenever I drive the car. I had to hurry to pick up Dr. Spegeticus. We were to discuss the secret Chrome Room over a bite of lunch. He often ate a cheese burger with everything. He enjoyed the mixing of flavors. Thin meat patty, melted cheese, lettuce, catsup, mustard, mayonnaise, tomato, secret sauce, vinegar, pickle, hot pepper, and the bun. His assistant always had the diet plate. She was a thin creature. Always dressed smartly, and heavy eyelashes. I had it on good information that she never took notes on Dr. Spegeticus' experiments, but remembered everything. I wondered if they slept together. They never seemed very friendly at our little lunches, but then that could be just a put-on.

I tape recorded our conversation that afternoon. The following is part of a transcript that my secretary typed:

(I am =, Dr. Spegeticus is -)
= I might know who tried to shoebox you yesterday.
- What will it cost me?
= You get right to the facts don't you, Dr. Spegeticus?
- Are you interested in Hellen here?
(He placed his hand on her shoulder.)
= I got my own gal, I was thinking more in the line of cash.
- That's what I mean, Hellen here takes care of my money.

I have four Ray Guns at the present. The first is the tin foil one that I used to defend the Doctor. The second is made from a piece of bent clothes hanger. A friend of mine gave it to me about three months ago. The third was part of a wooden frame. It appears that someone sawed the frame apart to throw it away. The fourth is a piece of old string that happens to be hardened, probably from dog urine.

I needed some answers from Hellen. She always leaves her apartment about seven fifteen each morning, so I parked my Mustang out at the steps. To help make her more comfortable, I planned to offer her a diet cola drink that I had placed in the glove compartment. I checked to make sure it was still cold. . . Yup, good enough for the person whom I suspected most. A youth approached my auto. He was probably about 14 years old.

"Hey, Pops, what'er ya lookin' at?"

"Get the HELL away!" I shoved the dog urine string Ray Gun in his face to punctuate my threat. He ran off like a wounded pigeon.

Hellen came down the steps after a few more minutes. I openend the car door.

"Toots, let's take a drive. Hop in."

"Sure."

The left front tire screeched as I turned onto Main Street.

"I want some answers," I intoned.

"I want some questions."

I liked her style.

REGULATIONS FOR RAY GUN USE

1 THE RAY GUN OWNER MUST PROVIDE THE RAY GUN SOUNDS
2 THE RAY GUN OWNER MUST USE THE PROPER STANCE WHILE OPERATING THE RAY GUN
3 THE RAY GUN, THE SOUNDS, AND THE STANCE MUST BE ART.

"Take off your top, I want to see your chest." I did as I was told. "You have quite a lot of hair. I don't really like hair."

"I could shave, but the hair would just come back fuller. . ." She took a long pull on her diet cola. My idea had worked just as I has planned. Her dark eyes darted from the glove compartment to my face.

"I don't know what your talking about. I would never harm Dr. Spegeticus' work. Never. I'm sorry you suspected me."

"I don't, I never did. I just wanted some info. 'Thought maybe you could help. It's in the interest of the Doctor."

"You should talk to my sister."

"I will."

I did the following things:

Went to the store. Picked up a popular news magazine, a bag of corn chips, a bag of circus peanuts, a plastic bottle of ginger ale, a package of lunch meat, and small bottle of sleeping medicine.

Went to the office, ate most of the food, threw out the circus peanuts and the magazine, drank the medicine.

Visited the Ray Gun theater on Vine.

The Poster outside the Theater

'Now playing — You! A giant Mirror has been placed on stage. The audience is the play. The Mirror is tilted so you can see yourself, and meet the person in front of you! Beside you! Behind you! Each ticket 30

Met Linda, a one night stand from about a year ago. She was behind me — two rows. I drove her home. She has dark black hair, and a fair complexion. Her nose curves out a little too far, but I can overlook that. I did. parked the car in the lot next to her house; the engine whirred to a stop. Silence dragged in the air. I bit my lower lip.

"Linda, I'll walk you to the door."

"OK, Jim. . . "

The next morning, after I fixed us a couple of scrambled eggs, I set out to see Professor Spoonjelly. The Professor had called the other day, and wanted to talk about a new idea of his. Linda spoke at breakfast.

"Jim, I want to know. . . if you'd like to come back here. . . and spend some real time."

"Babe, I think I would."

Change The Second Rule of Ray Guns — Allow Ray Guns to be Built

"But, Professor Spoonjelly, what will that mean? How can you make a Ray Gun?"

"Simple, very simple. I have made a few. Here step into my workshop."

A cluttered room. Many shelves on the wall, with boxes full of things. Wood scraps, plastic army men, old paint brushes, thumb tacks, used ball point pens, torn maps, shirt sleeves.

"Take a look at this Ray Gun."

Wooden right angle. Painted with a combination of black and red paint. The paint was not allowed to dry before a blue enamel was sprayed on top. A small hole was drilled into the handle about a fourth inch deep.

"It looks like the real ice, Professor. But, it gives me an eerie feeling. Not being found. . . "

I had a dream that night, about finding pennies along the road. Every where I looked there were pennies covering the ground. I tried picking them up. Under the coins were more pennies. The ground was pennies. The whole earth, in fact, copper pennies. My last thoughts in the dream — Sinking into the 'earth'. Covered over with pennies.

Someone jumped onto the car. ... Stamped on the brakes. Screeee! The car slid to the right. An arm reached in, tried to hit me with a book. Grabbed the arm, pulled. He flipped off the side. "Hold it there! I've got a Ray Gun on you!" He JUMPED. The coat hanger Ray Gun. "All right, PwOoooop!" So much for him.

From the radio!

"There is another delay from the High Court as to whether Professor Spoonjelly can build Ray Guns. This landmark decision is already the longest hearing in history."

"That's not the point Jim. I don't know what you're getting so upset about."

"Linda, Linda. . . How can a person make a Ray Gun?"

"You said yourself that Professor Spoonjelly's looked just like a found one."

"It didn't really. . . It looked. . . Shit, I'm about to contradict myself."

"What were you going to say?"

"It looked right. I could'a used it. It would sound like this: 'Fuuummm'. And the stance would be like this."

Feet together. Back straight. Arm perpendicular to the body. Face elongated. Eyes slightly closed, and staring away from the target.

"It's just so different."

"It's just so new to think that men can make Ray Guns. But, maybe they can. . . "

She clasped my belt buckle with her slender fingers. I kissed her ear, that tickled.

When I was a child, I had about fifteen different little cars. Metals ones with plastic wheels. They drove on orange plastic roads. My friends and I raced all day. One of my cars almost won. It was white with two black stripes running down the top.

In the box to your left, there is a collection of doll legs. Legs from all kinds of dolls. Most of them female. Take a look. Some of them bend at the knee, others

don't. The ones that don't, I have to cut apart and sculpt a bent knee with plastic putty. Some of the feet are exquisite. . . Here's one that I particularly like. Notice the slender shape, and the high arch.

I was driving along the Southern edge of town, where a few buildings are scattered around. Over there, a deserted hot dog factory. I turned onto the access road. A wooden gate stretched across the opening to the parking lot. Pressing down on the acelerator I drove the car through it. CRACK! KWISH! Two of the six front head lights broke. An old rusted padlock hung on a broken hinge. The door squealed as I nudged it forward. The smell of rotten meat, mildew, oil, and urine spilled out. Holding my tie over my nose I entered.

Old Machines	Old Machines	Old Machines	Old Machines
			broken w/time
debris	oil stains	55	out of use
trash			dust collecting
		dirty bolts	
broken glass	rags		bent connecting rod

The 'bent connecting rod' is actually a Ray Gun. I found it. Back at the car, I wiped it off with gasoline and a paper towel. I sat and studied it. The sun was sinking behind a patch of dry weeds. A breeze blew a few sounds past the rolled down window.

"Now I'm not as fond of it as when I found it," I told Linda. She picked it up, from the kitchen table. "The metal has a cool gleam, but it's too thin, too narrow to hold comfortably." She held it up, pointing it at the blender.

"You're right. Have you talked to my sister yet?" It had slipped my mind.

"No, I haven't. What's her address?" The phone rang. Dr. Spegeticus.

(-me, = him)
= I want to tell you about some new developments, but I can't over the phone.
- I'll be right over.
= No, it'll have to be later this evening. About — PM, meet me under the — Bridge.
- OK, I'll be there, Doctor!

"I'll have to talk to your sister later. Right not I could use a sandwich. What do we have?"

(Her nightgown is very old. The lining is deteriorating. She likes me to pluck the red dust balls that get caught in her nate.) (Often she massages my feet in the evening. She likes feet very much.) (There is just enough space behind her dresser, under the hanging mirror for her to hide.)

Dr. Spegeticus - wearing a light blue overcoat, and brown leather shoes. "Jim, Hellen is gone. I don't know what happened. She went out to pick up a couple things for an experiment, and she hasn't returned. That was yesterday."

"I'll begin searching tonight. Would you call Linda and tell her that I'll be late?"

Open the car door. Close. Turn the key, shift into drive, step on the gas. 'Vurooom!' I'm off to the Chrome Room.

Its reflective surfaces reveal all. A hand to the right means a hand to the left. A hand to the left means a reflection to the right, and a hand back to the left again. An arm to the right means a reflection to the left, reflection to the right, reality left: "Van Braun, I expected you here."

"We can make a deal, now. I have the girl."

"Hellen, are you OK?"

"Jim is that you?"

"Yes. No deal, Van Braun! Hellen duck!"

I pull the frame corner Ray Gun! "Kawaoo!" Kwish! Splinters of chrome scatter in the air. I missed. He fires at me. I get a glimpse of his Ray Gun to my right.

A tin can. Squashed flat, and bent in half. Scratched alumium, red paint and white paint set off from scratched aluminum.

"Nik Nik!" He missed, too. Shower of gleaming atoms. I spin on my right heel, step down hard with my left. Bend my arm, extending the Ray Gun slightly upwards. "KAWAOO!!" His end. The roof is about to cave in! I grab her arm!

"Follow me!!" As we rush out, the structure caves in like an arm bending. Dust is blown in our hair.

"I want to thank you."

"Don't mention it."

A Day of Writing

I snatch at last things and tuck them away like tired children. Last loves and last earths. In the dark I excavate a last prayer and cover it with stones, leave it without a name.

morning

I love you I am falling from these hills
searching meadows for your hand
far away as if in another sky
or another year birds firework the air
a mask of birds about the blue
their raucous cry stuck in a tree

I extract a moment unrind it
just rip it out of time oh
minstrel syllable cool dipthong
hollow in a glittering horn
perched between my lips
you sputter out on wings

afternoon

we set hourglasses in the sun we
are listening in waterbug hush
the day stalled in some threes
stretches out like a smiling mannequin
her face already swelling
in the light the last light the earth the last earth

syllables slip through my fingers
melodies unravel about my hands
I stammer out a sacrifice
like a pythagorean on the verge
of a theorem sunset
squares the wall euclid rising

night

we search for sleep among glades
strewn with the bones of fairies
the world is poised like a tightened drum
twisting trees open the night to this wood
offering wombs of wind and sound to find
me this hour poised to rip out a star

the moon pencils no syllable
no suicide broken sounds set in rhyme
the moon is pinned above the sea
it announces each hour
like an overused tamborine
it is orphic at the edge of night

dear god after the last child will you
materialize into a vision of bells dear
god the sun is exploding against the trees it
is throwing up your silhouettes in fire dear god
weren't you whistling some popular tune
when the cripple tried to get on the bus

— *Albert Kapikian*

Night Watch

I'll begin with a death
since that is where all secrets begin,
plants springing from dead leaves,
my father's death.
The first hour I sit with the body, I do not look,
no more than I would violate the privacy
of a sleeper on a bus.
The second hour I do nothing but look.
Strange how the hands of the dead hold their shape
while the face seeks its level
nameless as water.

In the city, morticians need a photograph
to shape the cooling butter
back into the man.

Much later I hate how horizontal he is.
They should stand him up.
Do they think I would confuse him with the living?
I would no more know him for my father
than the young bitch dog
who mates her father openly,
then wags her tail.
Since no one is around
I learn his marble skin is friendly
like the arms of a comfortable chair.
The mouth will not change
its plastic smile.
By the fourth hour we are old friends,
now that conversation comes no easier,
and I can turn his face in my hands,
and old coin that buys nothing.
Toward dawn I leave my father
his secrets in tact and turn
to something I can get inside of
like rain.

— *Sarah Maté*

— Hal Schmulowitz

Bawd

Duck-tongued, mighty-hipped stands Bawd.
Head cocked, bosom bombast, railer of wives' tales,
you locomotive of lust come
and visit me.
Push up your petticoats, your brass buckled shoes
covered with straw dust.
Let's talk of foreskins, let's be as close as midwives
and share the secrets of our skirts.
Tiny little titties, their little spouts—
love is a naked fountain, Bawd,
and we the well, the quim of all cupidity.

Oh Bawd, be my muse.
Let us lisp and rattle over lips that helter-skelter
lasp and curl, hard pink tongues falling
where they will.
Pass the mug, Bawd, and let's wipe our mouth
of male froth, a late night's leisure,
the history of slobber re-tell,
the old gut to butt trick.

It was you, Bawd, pink stockinged
at the bus stop I saw.
And once behind the bar, with no slip on,
you tended twenty men.
Be brash, purple, full of juice,
kittens, grow seven nipples if you must
to 'commodate your herd.
They will run laps around your belly,
dazzled.

And I in attendence, Bawd, all hurly-burly
in your apron's wake
will learn the world's soft urgings
the body's deep song
that keeps on singing after drunks
starlit and akimbo forget their names
and all the bars in the world
shut down.

— *Sibbie O'Sullivan*

Adam Becoming

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (Genesis 2:7)

If I stretch deep enough, I think
the sea will still be there
one last time I remember
right down to my ribs
the night filling with slow stars
my pulse rounding long to close on itself
wristbone and island shaped in my sleep.
In this remembering
no thing has heard its name yet.
I still feel the dust
stirring between my fingers.

I want to recall my hands
as they were before I lived
before I called them empty
and filled them again with time or tools.
I would use them now to grip
at the hardening earth, but I am
rising, dust swirls at my knees
and I can never lie down again.

What is this pain? A word
shudders up through me and leaves
a new hollow.
It is called *air*
a different breath
and the oceans pour through my fists.
Ruin of gravity, my robe of earth fallen
I have lost all but this grave of skin.
I look down through a breath
and see my feet dancing out of the young dust
and weep like rain, and go on dancing.

— *Lisa J. McCullough*

Eve's Side

In the beginning I was only an urge
a desire growing like a sprig of ivy
planted in the side closest to your heart,
my body conceived as a reply to yours.

I was the frivolous one
you said yourself
I never had a head for names
always wanted to speak
a different kind of language,
a language built upon appearances:
When I said antelope
was a word that knew how to run
and you couldn't call a lizard that
what did I know? It's true
I never understood the reason
for the rules. They always seemed
so arbitrary, a game we used to play
a test, a double dare.

It's not my fault I tempted you
you dreamed me up after all.
I was your echo always
answering from the bottom
of a well. I was the reflection
of your eye caste out
upon the waters, suddenly
making ripples of my own.
Breathless at the thought of falling
yes, but breathless as a fish is
while you were grasping at air
I was the moon rising through water,
I was lifted, yes lifted on a wave
until I felt the very ground
give way and how I felt
a wilderness
new in me then . . .

It might have been
an unlit room
we stood somewhere reaching out
the taste of fur catching
in our mouths
that rancid human smell
I know for you it was like stepping down
but with the manners of a cat
and an eye for the dark
I had come
to birth
again.

— *Cynthia Matsakis-Anderson*

— *Leslie Milofsky*

— Ki Ho Park

— Roger Allen

The Muse

You were frightened
when the sun left the trees
to nothing but our voices
in the black. We wavered
like old Italian shades
you said, when the wind
caught the broken glass of our lantern.
The kerosene flame
fluttered to your voice
threatening to go out,
joking in choices of paths
up through the canyon
along cliffs into briars
or confused branches of hemlocks
or the quick sure wideness
that would sink us down
over the falls or leave us
flayed out prey—
Dumb, we said, and sat down

drank from the stream and the green bottle
of bardolino that we couldn't see, laughing
about bent cigarettes' addiction
to late night mountain climbers—
It's not too much further, and then
you kissed me, breasts swelling
right through my sweaty shirt. Sara.
All of our sounds fluttered like scraps
or orange monarchs headed south, stopped
in the crack of an abandoned
elevated highway. The Hudson river, jazz
desperate for food for a hit
in an old collapsed vein, we heard it
spraying moss on the rocks
like it always has, here in the Shehandoah
or in the rusted bilge of a Panamanian
tanker riding high
confusing the currents into Brooklyn.
The bardolino and the stream
in our hair and skin hard and soft

and moving and so full of you,
the tastes in our mouths, until
you are so wet, you said, turning
me into your body, until the feminine
rhyme of the falls, over and over
became your hands and mine
unwrapping, playing, laughing
despite the lost forest
with our presents.

— *David Hall*

Awaiting Your Return

Morning opens,
a peach, wet and gold
we roll in the night-soaked whiskers of grass,
yawn sleep from our spines
arch our backs
and spend time slow,
sniffing our paws.

— *Leslie Milofsky*

— Vivien DesLandes

Perspective

Today my daughter had warts
cut from her sole.

Lurid photos of heels
and toes hung on the
examining room wall.
in a lamplit corner
the arthritis man posed,
pink jelly crammed
between his joints.
uneasy stains
marred the mustard carpet:
feet
before & after.

Long, white, unfamiliar
fingers bit into my arm
a neck arched back
like a defeated dog.
from an open mouth
jutted fossilized teeth
& lashes shut out
eyes.

the room swung like a lantern;
she had diminshed to a mummy white
bundle.

my fingers reached like tweezers
for the tendrils shining
on her forehead;
I gathered her
like a newborn
to my side.

— *Betty Bernard*

— Greg Miller

So Good Together

— Sarah Wildberger

So I'm on the beltway and down and around the Route 50 ramp (Ocean Gateway!) comes a lovely bike, what kind is it, now check that out, a Kawasaki, a, um, 750, strong legs, black hair, black shades . . . He loops around behind and lunges out on the lane at my left. I smile and raise my hand to him and—amazing!—he touches a hand to his mouth mean teeth flashing and throws a kiss! He revs up a few feet in front so I go down on the accelerator and slip in front of him. And he pushes it up a few more inches 'till he's on top of me, we're leapfrogging down the freeway but wait a minute that's my exit—and I have to pull out, feeling suddenly as dumb as a dog obsessed with chasing cars, running out in the street, tongue flapping.

March

Monday afternoon, dance class, stretches, barre exercises . . . we were in the middle of this one plie type thing, I guess it looks pretty silly, you have to stick your butt out and half squat instead of pulling it under. It's done to a three-quarter count, and the accompanist was playing a bouncy little tune, but in strange chords, a sort of minor . . . there was something familiar about it, but I couldn't place it until it clicked and I burst out laughing so hard my butt hit the floor. "Give me . . . your dirty love . . . " I sang out.

The young man at the piano crashed his hands down on the keys. "Curses! I have been apprehended!" He threw off a violent boogie riff.

"Come on, Travis, I know it's been a long day, but let's keep it together, all right?" Then the teacher looked at me. "Please," she said reproachfully.

After class he came running over to me, but then he stopped short and looked at the ground and said: "Umm . . . " I would *not* laugh.

"Ummm . . . would you like to go to dinner with me? There's a, uh, nice place near here that I go to sometimes . . . "

"I would like that very much," I told him.

"I thought you would, I just had a feeling . . . " He smiled up at me. "Do you have a car?"

He led us through the empty restaurant to a table for ten in the back. "We should sit at both heads of this. Talk through megaphones," I laughed. I rubbed my ears.They tingled as warm blood flowed back into them.

"Yes, fine," he told the waiter. "I don't know, they have Valpolicella here as the house red . . . " he asked me.

"Yes, red cause it's cold out."

He lit a cigarette and gestured toward this medieval axe thing hanging on the wall above my head. "Now I butcher maidens with that for your amusement. Lay 'em out on the table. Ha-ha . . . " Evil laugh. There was a suit of armor at our elbows like a petrified waiter. "And look at that guy . . . They have a greek chef here, would you believe it?"

Eat anything how could I eat. He lit my cigarette and my hands shook like I had DT's. Drink, relax, remember how to hold a glass, how to swallow. Please don't smile at me it makes the muscles in my thighs contract. Drink, relax—but don't

drink too much you'll get stupid take it easy . . .

" . . . that was the first one he made that won a prize, and the camera he made it with, he *stole* it, do you believe that? His whole philosophy is that you can make a film on guts alone, and you *must* steal if it's the only way . . . "

It was all right if he was talking. His voice was so rich, of a constantly changing pitch: the strange way he had of placing emphasis on the most unlikely word, the ellipses you heard when he turned the most beautiful phrases into throwaway lines—and his hands, what hands as they sliced the air to punctuate or languidly beckoned ghosts as if moving through water to evoke. It didn't matter what he said but that was wonderful, too, sensuous and strange.

" . . . a supermarket at two a.m. with the bright lights searing my eyes . . . Presently an odd little bald man hails me down, it was in front of the *cat food* and following him, a monumentally blond *woman* in a long fur coat. How did I know she wore nothing under that coat? God knows why, he introduced himself as Kurtz, and I—I have to admit I hauled my ass out of that place fast, I knew it wasn't time . . . "

Comprehension could only come in bursts before I got caught up in the music again, but that was all right, he was singing to himself anyway.

" . . . in wide screen you have to shoot at a slight angle and you also lose quite a bit of your depth of field, but he got around it by using that telephoto all the time, so it's a case of artfulness out of necessity . . . Here, you want to try these, they're great." He speared some olives and placed them on my plate. "Try them," he smiled.

They are delicious; I could eat after all.

He pushed himself back in his chair and stretched his legs out under the table. They were very good legs. "Well my girl, if you want to make films I'd say go for Richardson next semester, *not* Chinanski, he's a lush and a buffoon . . . "

"I like him. I'm taking a class with him now—"

"Oh yeah. Easy *Reader's Digest* Bergman . . . well hell," he said, raking his fingers through his black hair, pushing it back from his forehead and smoothing down the waves that fell over his shirt collar. "It's just that he's not so good on the technical end of things . . . "

I watched his face when he wasn't watching me. He had a straight nose and well formed lips, nothing slack about them—but the most beautiful was the smooth expanse of his high forehead. His hair fell back from each side in straight and shaggy layers like a bird's wing. He rubbed the tip of his boot lightly across the top of my shoe, deliberately, caressingly. My heart began cavorting like a thirties musical.

We're in the money
Come on my honey . . .

Busby Berkeley girls kaleidoscoped in a thousand directions and dimensions, white feather fans wafting precariously on their ridiculous headpieces.

Old man depression
You are *through*
You done us wrong—
oh—

Oh what nonsense. "Um, Travis, I think I'd better get back now, I've got some work to do tonight . . . Can I give you a ride home?"

"Well, I have to go back to school to get my bike. It's parked outside the art building."

"Then you're riding home from there? Where do you live?"

He sighed and looked off in the distance. "I don't live anywhere now. I just got kicked out of my apartment because I didn't feel like paying the rent. You see, she didn't collect it for about three months so I figured I was safe . . . Of course she came around again. Money, I just spend it. My parents might send me some soon. I don't worry about it."

He put out his cigarette. "You know a guy named John Sutherland? He's the editor of the paper at school." I shook my head." "Well, I might move in with him. He said I could live with him if I'd work on the paper. He'd just take my paycheck. But that wouldn't be for a few weeks."

"Do you write, or—"

"No, I do artwork, layout, stuff like that." He rapped his cigarette pack against the edge of the table. "I guess I'll just find a floor to camp out on tonight," he sighed.

Oh soft heart soft touch are you going to invite him to stay in your room?

Hot water blasted down on me. I soaped my face. Suddenly the shower door scraped open and he stepped in and pushed me back against the wall. "You look like a rabid animal," he said, precisely. "Foaming at the mouth." He grabbed the soap and slid it slowly over my body. I closed my eyes.

You knew something would happen, you knew it when you invited him in last night.

April

Knock knock and his face behind the window, plastered up against it like a vampire bat, hands spread, nose mashed. He moved back as I left the typewriter behind and swung the window open for him. These windows were not meant to be opened; the building was hermetically sealed—but with a screwdriver and a minimum of damage they could be forced. This was *verboten* and so was his presence here, since last week. Security in my dorm was tight. There was hell to pay when he broke the fire door so we could get onto the roof in the new spring night to watch the Lyrids fall.

"I'm the Zombie Woof—the Zombie Woof," he sang-growled into my neck. He had a bottle of wine. "Come on, let's go play in the music room," he said.

"I have work to do," I pointed out.

"Come on, please? I'll teach you how to play the piano." He played his fingers along my arms and shoulders.

He switched the keyboard over to organ. A pattern of flashes from the light-up keyboard hanging over his head flickered as he played.

"Why do they have these light-up boards stuck on these things?"

"Testing. They can see if they're doing it right so they don't have to listen to it." He struck out some demonic calliope chords and started into an old Doors tune.

> We could be so good together
> Yeah, so good together—
> We could be *so good* together
> yeah we could
> You *know* we could!

You could play them without sound, I discovered happily. I played with the lights, making patterns hesitantly at first, then creating complicated rhythms of

light and dark, holding down as many varied keys as I could, using my elbows and chin. I could play the piano!

Tell you lies . . .
Tell you wicked lies . . .

Travis danced over to me, singing hollowly, like Jim Morrison.

Tell you about the world that we'll invent
Watching world without lament—
Enterprise—Expedition—
Invitation and invention . . .

He took my hands off the keyboard and turned and turned me around to face him. "Oh, there was something I wanted to see!" I told him, remembering suddenly. "Someone told me about these tunnels running underground over on the north side of campus You want to go look for them?"

"I've already seen them, they're not that great," he shrugged. "Wait a minute—have you ever been to the dam? Down on the river? That's a really neat place, the water comes in front of you like a curtain . . . come on, let's go out there. I brought a helmet for you 'cause I thought I might take you for a ride . . . Let's go.

August

"Are you writing up the paintings that woman did, over in the library gallery?"

"Come *on*, Travis, I can't do *everything*!"

"*You* come on, what *are* you doing?"

"The music show, the dance group, and the goddamned modern video!"

"All right." He came over and rubbed my neck, reading what I had in the type writer. "Well hell, I guess I could do it myself." He stuck a broken pencil in his back pocket and left.

We'd seen each other on and off over the summer; he'd traveled, I'd worked. Before school started again he started in on me about the paper; all enthusiasm, he urged me to try writing for them. "You know as much about films and dance and everything, as any of these artsy-fartsys hanging around here. Besides, it hardly matters how it *sounds*. No one reads it anyway. We just need intelligible words to fill the spaces."

I worked on the video piece in fits and starts after he'd left. I liked what the guy was doing, but I had to do some research to understand it. I always felt the reviews I wrote sounded dumb.

But this one was taking some kind of shape:

> . . . an interplay of forms that twisted, shifted, extended and receded through a third dimension created out of optical illusion—challenging our expectations about space on the screen. Though purely abstract, the piece calls up myriad associations—the forms themselves have an organic, even melancholy quality as they perform their impossibly precise geometric gyrations . . .

Travis blew in and started banging on a typewriter, cursing when he hit the wrong keys. I wrote:

> . . . brilliantly simple, in the manner of accidental scientific discoveries . . .

"Jesus God, will you listen to this bullshit!" Travis crowed, yanking the paper from his typewriter. " 'Marked by a savage disquiet, working the canvas ragged, paint ground into very threads . . . ' Oh this is really good. Listen to this: 'The most telling restlessness in this art, however, may be stylistic. Few contemporary

painters crowd their work with so much ambition; it bristles with visionary literary themes . . . ' Ha-ha, not to mention female genitalia, but we won't talk about *that*. I ought to do this full time."

"Did you *like* the paintings?" I asked, almost through my teeth.

"Oh sure," he answered, leaning back in his chair, shaking his hair back, turning his face to the ceiling. "Some of them were like my stuff. But these *reviews* . . . " He ran his hand through his hair, almost like a bird preening, bringing out the gloss of its feathers.

I took my paper out of the typewriter and considered throwing it away. But after all, it was only there to fill the spaces.

September

He came wandering in at three a.m. "I've been sitting on that mountain out there, under that big tree. It's got magic, there's *magic* up there. Here, listen to all this I wrote while I was up there. Listen: 'The emanations from the street reeked crisis. The atmosphere was directly opposed to any temperature whatsoever. The curtains wafted jazz-like with a neon glow . . . ' "

I rolled over in bed, sat up, lit a cigarette, and watched him recite. I wondered who had let him in. Kim must have been up or maybe he came through a crack in the window . . . I yawned and pulled my blanket around me like a shroud. I liked this house—I knew I couldn't have lived in those dorms again—and the other girls who lived here were friendly and let me alone. There was a park across the street with trees and a little hill—the 'mountain.' And the girls here liked Travis. Easy—when you don't have to work with him, sleep with him, play with him . . .

" 'A rhythm impossible to course through save by winged travel. The polypeds stalked new ground now, my meshed hair. A skeletal rattle racked the walls.' See, it's this sort of Armageddon scenario." He stopped suddenly. "Hey," he said, sitting down on the bed. "You're tired." He sounded more disappointed than apologetic. Then: "I'm sorry." He let his head fall down sideways on the bed. He poked gently at my stomach through an opening in the blanket. Then he butted his head against me and kissed my stomach. I put out my cigarette. Then he told me what he thought the end of the world would be like.

I dragged myself in and out of the shower. I had a class at nine o'clock and only twenty-two minutes to get there. He bounced around the room while I got my clothes together. I was putting my socks on when I felt a tug on my bra. Before I could turn around, he pulled my underpants down to my knees. I grabbed them up quickly and reached around to rehook my bra. "What the hell are you doing?" I shouted at him. He jumped to the floor and pulled my socks down, laughing maniacally. I kicked his hands away and grabbed my shirt and yanked it on. He pulled my pants down again. "Stop it!" I screamed. "STOP IT!" I beat my fist on the wall.

He sat down on the bed. "Well hell," he said, "I was only messing with you—"

"I don't have time for this kind of shit, Travis! I am going to be late. Do you understand? I *hate* to be late! You . . . "

He sat on the bed staring at the floor.

"Look," I told him, "there's some things about you I don't like. Some things you're doing. We have to talk about this. I want to talk to you when I get back this afternoon."

"Things you don't like, what do you mean, things you don't like? You have a list—or, oh pardon *me*—a critical *essay*? Every detail precisely noted—"

"We have to talk—"

"Oh, yeah, we have to com*muni*cate," he said sarcastically, pulling his boots on. "Let's not have any surprises here. Come on Travis, none of that poetry now, no stories. This is *seri*ous communic*ati*on," he said, imitating a shrewish woman's voice.

"Why can't you even—"

"I just have this feeling we're not re*lati*ng, you know, I mean you're not fully *involv*ed in the *coupli*ng process, as we say in the trade. Think back to your childhood now, did your parents *beat* you every time you refused to give a *name* to something? Every time you did *anything* the least bit goddamn spon*tane*ous?"

"You—you are *wrong*. You are *wrong*—"

"Fuck all that," he grumbled, stalking out the door.

I caught myself in the full-length mirror on the back of my door. Standing there in my underwear and falling-down socks for god's sake, my hair in all directions and a smear of toothpaste on my chin, bitching the guy out of the house. He might come back, I didn't care. I was in a hurry.

October

Oh, I didn't care. I sat on the mountain and stared at the sunset. The day had been unseasonably, miraculously hot. I was finding out that solitude suited me well. I had made two short films, both bad, but while I was cutting the second one I made the discovery: I knew I had the feeling for editing, like a seed inside. I knew how movements should follow, I could see the rhythms in the strips I spliced together. I watched stories take shape under my fingers.

The wind kicked up and blew big gray clouds in front of the gold light. The air became darker and fuller and I ran down the hill and out of the park, fearful because the wind said a storm was coming. The hair on my arms stood on end. I ran in the door just as the first thunder sounded.

I put on some water for coffee. There was a loud rattling at the windows. "My god, it's raining hard," Kim said, looking up from the television show she was watching. I went to the window.

"It's hail!" I told her. She came to the window to see. A motorcycle pulled up in front of the house. "What is he trying to prove?" I muttered.

"Is that Travis?" Kim asked, peering out.

"Looks like it," I said. "Look—can you answer the door? I have to—my water's boiling." I stood in the kitchen letting steam rise into my face. I heard them talking, and then I heard Travis come into the kitchen.

"Would you like some coffee?" I asked, without turning around.

"Yes, yes that would be good." His voice still sang without singing. It hadn't been *that* long, for god's sake.

I turned around. "What were you doing, riding that thing in a hailstorm? You crazy?" I had to smile at him.

He pushed his hair back from his forehead. "I didn't know it was going to when I left. It's a good thing I wore the helmet. See, I wanted to take you for a ride. It was so warm out . . . "

"Well thanks, I guess," I said. I poured the water into the cups. "Let's go into the other room." We sat down on the couch. "Are you still staying at John's?"

"Yes, but not for long," he smiled. "I'm not helping him with the paper anymore, it got too boring—after you left." He smiled. "So I got this job playing keyboards with this country western band, do you believe that?" I had to laugh at that. "But it's fun, it really is, I can *go off* on solos if I want."

"How's school?" I asked him.

"I haven't been in for a while, but I'll make it up . . . " He always did it that way. And, infuriatingly enough, it worked for him. "Hey look, it stopped," he said, looking out the window. "Let's go—" he stopped, looked at me, then continued: "You want to go outside in it? I want to see what it looks like."

"So do I," I told him.

We ran across the street, kicking the icy pebbles out of our path. He reached the park first and started scooping handfuls of hailstones off the grass and flinging them into the air like a rich man throwing his coins around. "Look at this one!" He showed me a hailstone the size of a bird's egg. "Let's run up the mountain. Let's run!"

My breath came faster and faster as I ran up the hill. The stones bruised my feet and burned my ankles. He grasped me too tightly; we both fought for breath. "Please . . . be with me . . . " he breathed, rubbing his head against my shoulder. I breathed the burnt-wood smell of his black hair.

He pressed down on my shoulders, hard, until we were on our knees, and down, the sharp hailstones biting my back. He wrapped his legs around me and rolled us over, and over, and down the hill, almost rolling apart before we banged into a juniper at the bottom.

We lay heavy and wet, tangled and crushed like old vines on the forest floor, the fresh green coiled shoots that had bound us now rotting.

I began by slowly extracting one of my arms from the confusion of limbs we had become.

December

I was up in my room with two friends playing actors, sweating to death from the lights and trying to get my fourth film shot.

"I'm going to count real slow . . . now on one . . . two . . . three . . . now Scott you stroke . . . her hair . . . away . . from her face . . . All right! God, this is beautiful, you two are *making* this film . . . " I was trying to embarass Scott so he'd be more hesitant but he just smiled. He *knew* he was beautiful. "Do you mind—do you think we could do it one more time? Just to make sure . . . " I peered through the viewfinder again. My head felt twisted with pain from holding one eye shut for so long. I suddenly noticed a twinkling prismatic light dancing in the corner of the frame. "Damn!" I hissed. I went to the corner of the room to fix the angle on the light mounted there.

"What's wrong?" Scott asked, turning to see.

"Flare, the light bounces. Stay in those places—we have to do it again."

Margaret sighed. I smiled at them. "I'm sorry. It'll be right this time."

"Hello," Travis said from the doorway.

"Oh, hi, Travis," Scott waved at him, his feet glued into position.

The girls and I had decided to let him live in the basement, since he was hardly ever home. He just needed a place to keep his books. He came by about once or twice a week. Our schedules opposed.

"You're going to need more light than that," he said, strolling into the room. "Have you checked your meter?"

"I've got lots of light, it's perfect," I told him. I looked through the viewfinder again.

"I don't know . . . can I see?" He came over toward the camera.

I straightened up, rubbing my back. "Look Travis, you can watch if you want, but I'm not going to have these people stand around while you check my work, okay?"

He leaned in the doorway, arms folded.

"Okay, you two, let's try it again. Scott? One . . . two . . . three . . . "

Scott burst out laughing. "Stop, stop," he cried. "I'm sorry . . . I couldn't help it. He was making faces."

I turned and looked at Travis. He gave an elaborate shrug. I took a deep breath. "This is serious for me. I want you out."

"It won't matter what you get them to do. There's not enough light."

"Get out. I don't care. Let me do my work in peace."

I looked through the viewfinder again. I heard him walk away.

You don't have enough light.

I have more than enough light.

— *Marcie Wolf*

Reflections at St. Michaels Harbor

(for my father)

All night long, the boats sputter into harbor,
drop anchor, and, once again, it is quiet.

Before daybreak, an anchor drags.
Two boats collide, confirm
the greatest of fears.
One man says to the other,
"It was the current, the slant of the earth."
They both scramble—
check the damage—
a cracked and mangled silence.

And to think, all night they bobbed,
swayed, bobbed and rocked,
swayed from their anchors,
blind men who simply knew
where everybody, every dark hull, stood.
The wind and tide had them perfectly,
pushed them equally. Kept them distanced.

Thousands of years ago, the continents were divided.
The bottom of the earth cast out every anchor,
let the lands go reckless.
They came to their settlement as silt does,
easing down to their beds, attesting to the fear of motion
with the comfort of safe anchorage.
And who is to say that the space between
hand and shake is not held by water?

And in our dreams, we are all Noah
looking for the only harbor that will hold us,
dragging the weight behind us
that cannot possibly keep us in place.
So when, in the night, these two boats smashed,
it was the sign that sailors look for,
telling them, move on, the land is moving,
it will not have you.

— *David Swerdlow*

— Jaime Epstein

— Ki Ho Park

Night

by Daryl Wakeley

1.

In the middle of College Ave he thought about dissonances.

In the middle of College Ave he did not think about anything else.

He thought: Bones and flutes? coffee and acetone? anemones and concrete? He thought: Gin and tonic or rum and coke, one or the other. He said, "There aren't any stars." The sky was grimy orange. Puddles in the street.

"The city lights wash them out. Cloudy," Mike said: City lights, city of lights, age of light. Suddenly thought: Sartre had dirty hands. Monday night. Essay. Do try.

Chris said, "I don't like places where you can't see the stars." He stepped up the curb to the sidewalk. "They keep away from the landscape too much. Ugly. Like places you can't hear the snow fall." Dirty sidewalks. Up to the elbows.

"New Jersey's like that," Mike said. "When it snows, all you can hear are traffic and people cursing. I guess away from the city things are a lot quieter." Chris nodded: Quieter, greener. "I guess away from the city's a lot different from what I'm used to."

Chris thought: Summer's almost too green. Winter's an expanse of white and brushstrokes. The sky when you look straight up. Orion. Chris said: "It's different."

Mike said: "Here we are." Chris thought: Rum and coke. It happened at Rulloff's, at Rulloff's. Mike opened the door. It was as crowded as he'd expected. There was a table near the back. Small tables and lots of chairs. Three glasses and a five-dollar bill: wet ring shapes, a shredded napkin. Mike said, "I'm glad we got a table. There aren't any left now."

Chris took off his hat, gloves, coat, scarf. Thought: Mummies.

Mike asked him, "So what do you want to drink?" Chris could hardly hear him, there were so many people talking, *Breakfast in America* was so loud. He sat down, said: "Gin and tonic." He thought: With a lime on top. Mike nodded, turned around, moved around people standing around the bar: Prestidigitation. Limon equals lemons and limes. Lemonless lemonade, lemon cheesecake, almond flavoring: Cyanide. Bitter almonds. Peach pits. Poison in the sugar merricat. Chris spread the water from ring to ring with his finger. It made them look like fat spiders. Fat cats. Merry very fat cats. Little bits of the napkin made whiskers. Eyes, ears, the tail. Cat in a bunch of roses. Tiny footprints. Towels. Dumb, he told himself, putting his hand in the cat. Mike came with two gin and tonics. Rattling ice and green lime slices. "Thanks," Chris said, taking one. He set it on the cat's face. Cold.

He took the lime from the side of the glass and dropped it in.

2.

From there to The Fusebox.

Mike said: "There's this one pinball machine, it's obviously designed to exploit some manufacturer's idea of adolescent sexual fantasies. It croons. Also gasps and sighs. It's almost obscene. I mean, really dumb." He held up his hands. "It

goes: Ooh! Aah!"

Chris said: "You're kidding." (Flashing lights, bells, explosions, vroom car noises. Space effects: Bright.) And people. Always lots of people. He was beginning to hate people. He said, "I don't believe it."

"No, really," Mike said. He took a quarter from his pocket. "Here, try it."

Clink into the slot.

"No," Chris said.

"Come on, really," Mike said.

Chris said: "No."

Mike said: "All right then." He hit the buttons. The machine flashed. It went pop. It went fling. Ping ping ping. Gasp: moan.

He said: "My god it really does!" He laughed.

Flip. Moan flash flash. Flip; ping chunk. Mike pulled back the plunger. He said: "You have to get the ball up the tube, you see." Ping. Flip. Gasp.

Chris looked at the woman with florescent skin. Lights flashed behind her. Numbers clicked and clicked. He thought: The score is artificially high. He frowned. He said: "Let's go."

Mike asked, "Already?" Bent over the machine. Shadows on his face went on and off. Flip. Ring.

"Yes," Chris said, and thought: Tilt.

3.

But scotch and water tastes so terrible.

Chris thought: Three and a half cheers for the easter bunny. May it rot in hell. He said: "I definitely think that Santa Claus should fuck the easter bunny up its furry little ass."

Mike said: "And mother Mary too."

That little maiden could keep her head! All right folks. Crucifixion is a lowly thing, how pure a thing is joy.

Chris said, "Caries are Elysian, Christ he layed his son, carry a liaison."

From the back someone was screaming: Motherfucker! Motherfucker! Motherfucker! Chris mumbled: Oh shut up.

The smoke was in the air like scarves.

Someone shouted: "Motherfucker! Motherfucker!"

Oh good lord: Chris thought darkly: god damn. "Isn't it interesting," Chris said, "how curses depend on religion or elimination or sex?"

Mike said, "Terribly."

This means either shitting is a religious experience or religion is misplaced sex.

Chris said: "I guess not." He leaned back. The chair creaked. He hit the underside of the table with his knee. Nothing spilled. Oh good lord, he thought, god damn. Maybe sex is misplaced religion.

The noise had been getting louder and louder. "More popcorn?" the waitress asked. Chris shook his head. That made the room shake. He found himself thinking of chicken. Shake & bake. He thought of thawing frozen chicken and laughed. It takes a tough man—. Chicken legs—*intercranial massage*!

4.

The night shook and the street was wrapping itself around his eyes. It was snowing just a little. There weren't any stars. The streetlights were not shouting his name. He thought: This here is our sheared experential world. He leaned

across the broad cold stones of the bridge and looked down. Vague gray. Stone and water. Waterfall stepping and steeping a way down. He watched sparks of snow shattering on the ledge and disappearing into the dark. Farther: Lights stayed the trees. Wind. The ledge cold on his elbows. It was, he thought, beautiful. "The lights," he said to Mike, "are like stars. If you pretend to look at something else, they'll lie out like a fixtured sky. They're not attached to the ground. There's nothing there. This bridge goes from wind to wind."

Mike said: "No, it goes from Collegetown to Cornell."

Chris said: "The sky's like a grimy orange."

Mike: "It's the sodium lights that do it."

Mike: "Don't fall in the gorge."

Mike: "Let's go."

Chris said: "You're probably right." He thought: Crazy. He pulled himself up to sit on the ledge, then lay back, spread his arms across the stone, fingers feeling the mortar-joints. His head lolled over the edge. Snowflakes stippled his face. "I wish it would all go away."

"It won't," Mike said. "Come on, let's go."

eucharist iii

you are my holy lunch
my sacred supper—

a piece of bread
a glass of wine

old bread, cheap wine
but, you are here

my brokenness can't
keep you out

softened by tears—
some bread, some wine

nails in my plate
piercing my dinner

amen—

— N. Paul Baker

— *Vivien DesLandes*

Dying Is an Art

Under stairs in a choked closet
inside a house too frail to hold the roof
she, inclined to separateness, conspires
a dangerous sleep on a potter's wheel.

Persistent as a waning star
she pummels clay coiled
like a circle of birds nowhere to go.

Lost in her private hour
as sly-footed sunlight stabs the dust
and familial voices rise
faces of children flower out
to prick her senses wild,
but the time is not right
for melodrama. For now
she will disdain
perfection in that cunning art.

But something beckons to a fateful day
when sated with the long rage
she fires clay
  unnoticed
    devours art.

— *Ruth Abramowitz*

After O'Keefe

To slip below the horizon
is to follow the sun.
Woman! I shout, where is
the woman I was supposed
to be? My braided intent
was worthy of something,
but I am shoveling in the dark,
trying to beat the frost.
I must remember the stones
for the bottoms of the pots.
Petals are loose on my feet,
my hands in mud to the wrists.
What I am trying to save,
I will have to save over and
over again.

A gathering on the porch:
"Do you know how many times
you have said *porch*
in your poems?" I thought
the major word was *enemy*.

I begin to shake when the wind
blows, my leaves drift down.
Winter-kill is a shriveler.
I harden my skin and brace
my spine.

Each day I lose something
I need. Before I make repairs
something else has broken down.
I need my glasses to see
the light in your eyes.

Woman of ninety in your white
Mercedes driving the desert,
send clues: how to create
the space I need to fill.
Where is the Woman I meant
to become. Save me from
the hostile young men who
think they invented
love.

— *Ann Darr*

— Susan Loftus

Contributers

Ruth Abramowitz has walked past summer's doorway, and now lashed to the stake, reaches for words • Born at the age of 63, **Roger Allen** is an asst. professor of life quality • **Cynthia Matsakis-Anderson** is Calvert's poetry editor • **Jon Armstrong** is the writer and metaphysical sculptor who wrote this sentence • **N. Paul Baker** studies English • **Betty Bernard** writes both poetry and fiction • **Heidi Bohi** is the Diamondback's Arts and Leisure editor • **Ann Darr** is finishing her 5th book of poetry, and taught at Md. last year • **Vivien DesLandes** is from Rio de Janeiro • **Jaime Epstein** is a sr. journalism mjr. • **D.S. Glassman**'s short story is her 1st published work • **Gerry Hinds**, born 0, grew 19 • **Albert Kapikian** is a jr. psychology mjr. • **Susan Libby** enjoys exploring areas that do not lead to gainful employment • **Susan Loftus** knows real quality as a way of creating its own image • **Tomás Martin** resents the imposition of structured thought into his life • **Sarah Máte** is a doctoral student in English • **Lisa McCullough** began as a chemistry mjr., but tucked it away in favor of ultimate wisdom, literature • **Greg Miller** is a winner of the Md. Scholoastic Film festival • **Leslie Milofsky** is treading the water between aspiring and working • **Ki Ho Park** "me no speak English" • **Sibbie O'Sullivan** will continue to write until she is rich and famous • **Hal Schmulowitz** is a sr. journalism mjr. • **Rose Solari** wanted to be a dancer • **David Swerdlow** is Calvert's editor • **Daryl Wakeley** is 5'9" • **Tom White** is a tall guy with red hair • **Sara Wildberger** is a jr. film mjr. • **Marcie Wolf** is a sr. art mjr. • **Kristin Zimmer** was born in Wash. D.C. in 1956 • **Robert Zimmet** is researching avante garde photography.